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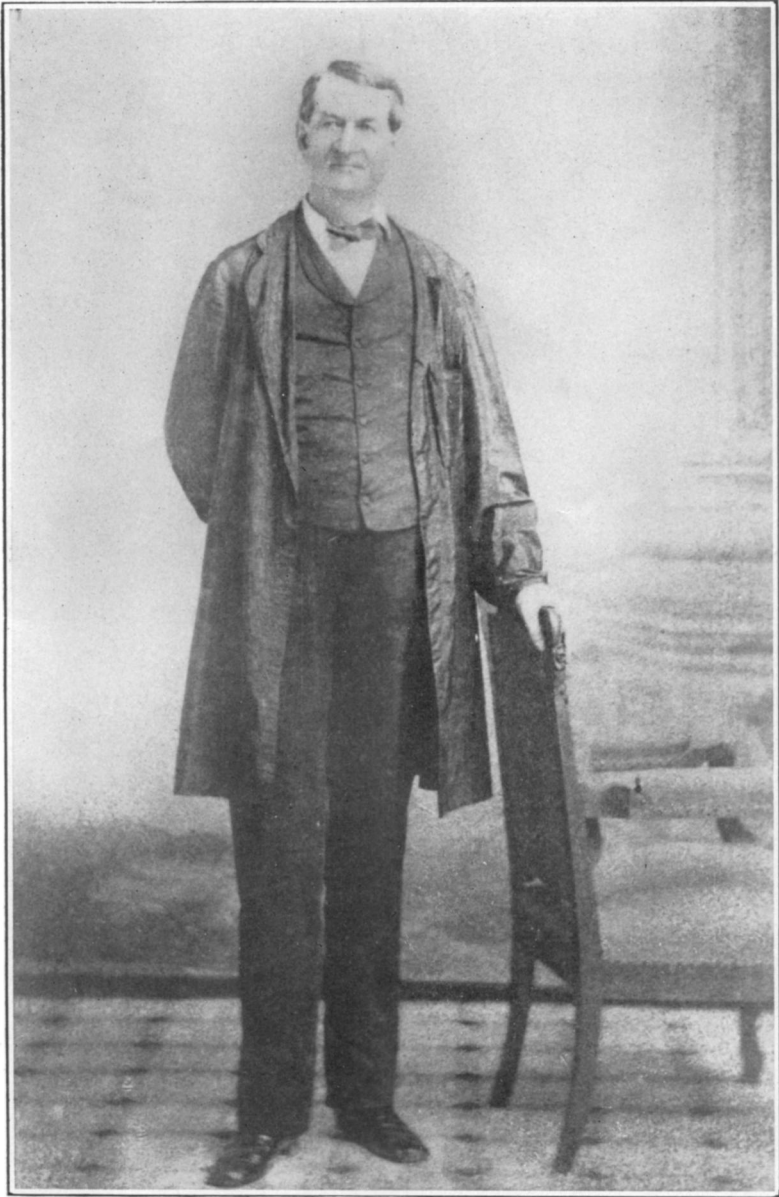
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ALEXANDER POPE FIELD.

ALEXANDER POPE FIELD.

By Frank E. Stevens.

Though in Illinois he occupied a very large measure of public attention, and in much of our history his name finds prominence, Field in his Illinois life represented more than anything else, "what might have been." Had his genius and his tremendous abilities been directed by a force higher than mere place hunting and that too none of the loftiest, with physical force added, he might have achieved a fame second to not more than half a dozen of our most illustrious, or at least, our strongest characters. But first, Field's habits¹ were none of the best. Against abstinency he was a rank offender. Other scriptural and social rules he violated with such effrontery to the social scheme that he made himself almost a social outcast. So that at the end when it came time to write down the deductions drawn from the equation, the effects of his long work brought little real lustre to his name and to a name made illustrious by other members of the family. Nevertheless in Illinois, Field occupied too large a place to be off-set by his personal follies and transgressions which injured him much more than they injured anybody else. For many years, his name appeared in public matters almost constantly and in framing their plans for advancement, politicians took Field into consideration as a factor of tremendous power and influence.

Alexander Pope Field was born in Louisville, Kentucky, November 30, 1800. The family bible, which I

¹ His faults, grave as they were, might not have held him down, necessarily. Others drank as heavily, notably Douglas. It was a drinking age. But Field, during his long Illinois residence, permitted himself to mire in moral quicksands.

was permitted to examine, states that he died on the 19th day of August, 1876, aged 75 years, 8 months and 19 days. If leap years affect the computation, then to that extent, I am wrong. His early life we cannot follow at all closely. He was a son of the noted and aristocratic Pope family, and as such must have been offered the very highest advantages². That he attended Transylvania, is asserted by those who knew the family and him to some extent while young. Prior to the year 1818, however, certainty can have little acquaintance with this sketch.

A suspicion is left behind that he was not a diligent student and that is true probably. But true or not true, when at about the time of the adoption of the first state constitution in 1818, he came with his uncle, Judge Nathaniel Pope³, who had been visiting Kentucky, he possessed a commanding appearance, an easy flow of language, an engaging manner, brilliant conversational powers and he possessed a ready command of the political history of his country which no other person in the new state possessed. To add to his ability to make himself likable, he had a fine voice for singing, and many there were who insisted that it had been highly cultivated. He spoke after the manner of the man who knew much; who had learned it without much effort and what he stated, he seemed sure of. He sprung into instant favor and like every other young person of good intellectual parts, he possessed political ambitions.

At the time of his arrival and for a considerable time thereafter, Jonesboro, in the county of Union, was one of the most prominent places in the State, and to Jonesboro Field went to establish himself. The prestige given him by reason of his relationship with Nathaniel Pope, who as delegate to Congress secured the admission of

² From his constant and accurate quotations in argument, if he had not studied deeply, his must have been an abnormal memory.

³ Gov. John Pope, of Arkansas, was another uncle.

Illinois, brought business to the young man immediately. At first he dealt in government lands. From the fact that his name as a lawyer does not appear upon the roster as an admitted practitioner until some years later⁴, the line of business pursued by him was obscured until a recent date, when it was discovered that he was a land speculator and practiced in the lower courts where no license was required.

Almost immediately after reaching his majority, we find him a candidate for office and he was elected to the lower house of the Third General Assembly, which convened at Vandalia, December 2, 1822, and adjourned February 19, 1823, and which as an Assembly, disgraced itself more than any dozen assemblies which have followed it, with the possible exception of the one which revolutionized the Supreme Court and turned this same Field out of office thereby. For that disgrace Field can not be exempted. His was the commanding genius and influence which concocted the plot and pushed through the legislature the resolution which sought by a contemplated amendment to the constitution, to saddle slavery onto the State.

In the senate the pro-slavery forces had the required two-thirds vote to put through any pro-slavery measure and into the senate the resolution providing for the constitutional convention to repeal the slavery inhibition, was introduced. It was opposed of course. Mr. Kinkade took the floor and in attempting to show that its object was to permit slavery in the State, he was interrupted violently and for the noise of others he was called to order and compelled to take his seat. The chair ruled him out of order and discussion was denied him and the other anti-slavery senators.

⁴ The roll of attorneys in the office of the clerk of the Supreme Court shows that Field was licensed in October, 1825 and enrolled June 1, 1827.

When the conspiracy was conceived, it was thought that the house lacked two votes of the necessary two-thirds needed to pass it. Thereupon there was begun a sort of sparring for points in the hope that some kind of a trade or fortuity might come to the surface which would suggest ways to secure the needed two votes. One conception was to the effect that an advantage might be secured by passing a convention resolution by a joint vote of both houses. Pursuant to it, the senate passed such a resolution in effect declaring that if two-thirds of all the members in both houses should recommend the people to vote for or against a constitutional convention, it would answer the formalities of the Constitution. For a test, Field introduced a similar resolution in the house, but it was rejected. The senate then passed the regular convention resolution and sent it over to the house. For purposes of a blind, the pro-slavery people permitted it to lie on the table, while another and similar resolution was introduced into the house. The latter received 22 votes, or just two short of the needed two-thirds. Nicholas Hansen of Pike, voted for it, a member named McFetridge voted against it and Rattan also voted against it for purposes of moving a reconsideration, as has been said. Thus with Rattan's vote, but one vote was needed and that vote the slavery people sought from McFetridge by promises to remove the county seat from Vienna to Bloomfield; promises which never were kept. When that vote had been secured, the slavery people had secured from Rattan's county, a request that he vote for the resolution and he thereupon announced his determination to do so. Beyond doubt the slumbering senate resolution might now be taken from the table and passed! On February 11th, it was taken from the table and put upon its passage. But a withering surprise greeted the pro-slavery forces; Hansen who had voted for the other resolution, now voted against the senate resolution and it was lost by one vote. The moment was

critical and rather stormy. Daimwood, a member who voted with the losing side, moved to reconsider. The speaker ruled the motion out of order of course and in the appeal taken to the whole house, he was sustained.

In the early part of the session, Hansen's right to his seat was contested by a man named Shaw, but he had been seated unanimously, Field voting to seat him. When, however, Hansen voted against the resolution, Field's anger knew no bounds and through his instrumentality, by securing a reconsideration of the action which seated Hansen, Hansen was unseated and Shaw was sent for and seated and voted with the pro-slavery forces thereafter. Notwithstanding the fact that the house was governed by Jefferson's Manual, rule 20 of which provided: "Nor shall any motion for reconsideration be in order unless made on the same day on which the vote was taken or within the next two days of the actual session, etc," the above result was obtained and still more disgraceful, the vote which sustained the Speaker's ruling on the Daimwood motion, was reconsidered and overturned; the Daimwood motion was declared in order and by Shaw's one vote, the convention resolution was passed by the house by the desired two-thirds vote. -

The tactics of Field toward the gallant band which fought his measure and his vicious means for carrying it, were those of the blackguard. He, with others abused and villified. He made threats and by means as revolutionary as those which at last deprived him of office, he carried the convention resolution through the house. No other measure but one was ever pushed through an Illinois Assembly under such questionable influences and that exception was the one just mentioned which removed him from the office of Secretary of State. In the latter case he but collided with the same force that controlled the Third General Assembly.

On February 15, 1823, a meeting of the prominent pro-slavery people who had gathered at the capital, was presided over by Col. Thomas Cox, then of Springfield, at which a committee was appointed to draft resolutions and an address which were to be presented to the people in justification of their measure and to advocate the repeal of the slavery inhibition found in the constitution of 1818. Field was made a member of that committee and he it was who prepared them. At a subsequent meeting held at the same place, February 17, 1823, the committee reported their resolutions and the address and then adjourned.

The reputation gained in that memorable legislative battle pushed Field to the front of the pro-slavery forces in the State and he was sent to the firing line of the dominant party in the long and fierce fight which followed, the result of which was his election in 1824 as one of the three presidential electors of the State.

The campaign was a long and furious one, but under the powerful efforts of Hooper Warren, Morris Birkbeck, John Mason Peck, Governor Edward Coles, and others, the resolution was snowed under by a substantial majority⁵.

⁵ Vote; for, 4,972; against, 6,640.

THE "CONVENTION" AGITATION.

The Illinois Intelligencer denounced the legislature for playing fast and loose with the Pike county men, which brought out a threat of legislative action and mob menace. On February 17, 1823, Field introduced the following resolution: "That the editors of the Illinois Intelligencer be requested forthwith to inform this house who is the author of a piece which appeared in their last paper, signed A. B. and which charges the legislature with corruption and dishonesty." Upon the appearance of the editorial a mob gathered before the building, but no further act of violence followed.

Historians have urged that the effort to secure a convention was not considered until the legislature met. In Union and Jackson counties the subject was agitated before election, and in February, 1822, at a meeting held at Jonesboro, Field introduced a resolution proposing an effort to elect members of the legislature who would recommend a convention for altering and amending the constitution. It was an anti-election issue.

The reason for his non-appearance in the Fourth General Assembly was because of his nomination as presidential elector and the necessity for a vast amount of work which that and the resolution campaigns demanded of him as leader. However, he was elected to the Fifth and Sixth General Assemblies, serving through his terms without a single event worthy special mention. With the final adjournment of the last named Assembly, his legislative services ceased for all time. For measures of any practical value to his State or relief for the people you will examine in vain the house journals. The first worthy measure bearing the impress of his name can not be found.

During that period, however, Field had been admitted to the bar formally and had advanced with rapid strides to the front of his profession. He attracted the attention of Governor Edwards, who had watched his course for some time, and when the opportunity presented itself, he appointed him Secretary of State, in 1828, which proved to be a sort of political shelf whereon he rested until in the year 1840 he was ousted to make room for Stephen A. Douglas, the "Little Giant."

On January 1, 1829, Field's commission as Secretary of State was issued and on January 23, 1829, he was sworn into office.

The office was profitable for the times and that influence might have had much to do with his long tenure. Moreover it did not interfere with his law practice, which took him all over the State and kept him from his office most of the time. His attachment for his practice was so strong that he retained his residence in Jonesboro for a considerable period and followed the circuit with tremendous success. Very soon he took a vacation down the river, ostensibly for his health, but more than likely for the purpose of securing something better from his uncle, Governor Pope, of Arkansas. The trip consumed considerable time and increased certain criticisms. His

absences continued for such long intervals that after awhile it created considerable adverse comment by his enemies, some of whom accused him of farming out his office. Remarks of that nature became so frequent and so forceful that Governor Edwards found it necessary to call attention to them and to remonstrate mildly*.

The appointment must have gratified Field immensely because in a letter addressed to Governor Edwards dated February 5th, 1829, he says, after congratulating the Governor upon his message: "All my friends are highly delighted at my appointment." On March 20, 1830, the protest had become so loud from the Governor that Field, who then was in Louisville for the benefit of his health as he stated, found himself compelled to promise that so soon as he was well enough to return, he would discipline his clerk, Mr. Posey, whose conduct seems to have been criticised and may have superinduced the criticism. In September he complains again of the state of his health, but no allusion is made to his continued absence from his office. On September 24th, however, he writes from Jonesboro in a manner which indicates that he had been impressed by the Governor on the 16th in a manner so forceful that he had concluded to neglect his duties no longer. Said he: "I do assure you that if it be in my power I will be in Vandalia by the 4th or 5th of October. Our courts have commenced, and I am necessarily compelled to attend to them. However, if I can, I will go to Vandalia and remain there a few days and return to our court which commences on the 18th of

* June 1, 1829, Hooper Warren, another sort of protégé of Gov. Edwards, who was looking for preferment, wrote from Galena to the Governor: "An occurrence has lately taken place here since my arrival which may lead to a vacancy that might prove still more to my advantage than to take an appointment in either of those places. Col. Field has let his office for one year to Mr. Ford, and has gone down the river with his family. There are various rumors respecting his departure—some think he will return in a few weeks, others that he will never come back again. I have heard it suggested that he has gone to Arkansas to receive some appointment under Gov. Pope."

October. You say that my continuance in office depends upon my future attention to business. I hope the business has been conducted well, and will in future be strictly attended to by myself or competent clerk. Mr. Posey has informed me that the office is in first rate order, and that himself and you have harmonized well." In February, 1831, we find him still domiciled at Jonesboro, from which point he writes Governor Edwards to the effect that he has been urged strongly to become a candidate for Congress in opposition to Duncan. Soon thereafter he must have removed to Vandalia, because in 1832, and at most times after the Black Hawk War, he writes from Vandalia as though it were his permanent domicile. Nevertheless, from his correspondence, we find him on the move; first at Kaskaskia, then across the State at Shawneetown, then again at Galena. Of course much of his traveling was compelled by the necessities of his very large law practice which took him over the State pretty generally. At the same time, in that correspondence with Governor Edwards, he alludes to work he is doing in the interests of the Governor in a political way.

When the Black Hawk War broke out, Field seems to have been located at Vandalia. In the first call for troops he did not respond, nor do we find him among those who enlisted in the emergency companies, but we do find him on the staff of General Henry, as Brigade Inspector. On July 9, 1832, feeling that further pursuit of the Indians was impossible and a battle improbable, Field, with Gov. Reynolds, Judge Breese and others, left the army at Lake Koshkonong and returned home.

The only reference we find to his services in that outbreak, is on July 24th, 1832, when in writing to Governor Edwards he urges that candidate of the necessity for being at work in the southern part of the district. At the same time he volunteers to go if Edwards will furnish the expense money. "If I had the means, but my money is entirely exhausted, I would go to Franklin, Pope,

Johnson, etc., and address the people for you. and if you could furnish it to me, I would start immediately. My war trip has drained me." So he writes. By the 30th Candidate Edwards must have sent the money, because we find Field writing that although unwell he will start with one of his friends immediately to Franklin, Gallatin and Pope. "where I am in hopes I can meet Breese and measure strength with him on the stump."

Confidential relations existed between him and Governor Edwards. In but one instance do we find Field antagonizing an Edwards measure. In that exception he did not hesitate to criticize the position taken by Edwards on the land question then uppermost in the public mind. At Equality, Field delivered a long speech filled with objections to the Edwards notion. It must have been a speech of unusual interest and of ability, because William J. Gatewood, one of the ablest lawyers of the times, found it expedient to listen to it and then write Edwards a letter about it. Just why Field should antagonize Edwards is not comprehensible from this distance because not long before that time, he congratu-

⁷ Field's devotion to Edwards dated back of the appointment as Secretary of State and continued until the latter died. Afterwards in 1829 when Edwards desired to return to the Senate, Field wrote from Jonesboro, November 8, as follows: "Things are going on better than you could have supposed. We have had meetings in Union, Johnson, Pope and intend having one in this county, and I will assure you Kinney will not get one-third of the votes in those counties and you may rest assured that things are going on better in this quarter than ever. Reynolds is with us and promises all you can desire in relation to your future movements."

On the 26th of the same month, Field wrote predicting the election of Edwards men to the legislature from his district and they were elected. On Sept. 17, 1830, Field wrote again a loyal letter, adding that Kane "has been with us (Jonesboro) for a day electioneering with all his originality."

Another letter touching this same campaign has just come to hand. It is dated, Jonesboro, Feb. 5, 1829: "If you feel a disposition again to embark in public life for the benefit and security of your friends, no pains shall be spared on my part to render such an effort successful. I have no doubt, should you desire it, your election to the Senate of the U. S., by the next legislature can be rendered perfectly secure; if your friends act with energy and circumspection we have nothing to fear."

lated Edwards upon his message affecting the very question. But his opposition made no difference with the existing friendship between the two men. While Edwards was inclined always to a certain degree of haughtiness, Field never incurred the visitation of it.

His ambition to run for Congress has been mentioned. Aside from minor county offices at an early date and the legislature, we do not find that Field was a candidate before the people of Illinois except in one instance. He seemed to prefer the office of lieutenant for others who sought votes, and his office of Secretary of State. The lone exception was his candidacy for Congress. In 1831 he was a candidate. In referring to a chance meeting with Breese at Lebanon, during the campaign, he said: "A friend who I was fortunate enough to find at the tavern, informed me that the people had collected in a grove to hear Breese speak. I immediately went down, engaged him again, and I am confident I never achieved a more signal victory in my life in a speech before the people." Before opening up his campaign, he laid the case before Edwards and offered to support him vigorously should he run. "If I do not run, Dunn certainly will. And I do think my prospect of success much more encouraging than his. But I wish it distinctly understood that if you have the most distant idea of running, I will at once abandon all such notions. Toward you I have the greatest friendship and would under no circumstances whatever do anything that would have the most remote tendency to injure your future prospect. But if you are determined not to offer at this election, I think my friends would do much better by taking me up, running me in preference to Dunn."

Field entered the contest and as we have seen, he engaged Breese at Lebanon. Something, however, must have happened, because on July 30th, we find him acknowledging the receipt of money which he proposed to use in paying his expenses in pushing Edwards' campaign

for the same office. At all events, Duncan got the office and Field could not have gone very far into the campaign on his own account, nor Edwards either.

In 1822-23-24 Field was a rabid pro-slavery man, affiliating with that political faction. In the year 1828 we find something like the effects of a revolution in his politics. In that year, as a delegate from Union county, he attended at Kaskaskia, a democratic convention, at which he was found to be just as rabid for Jackson for president, which included affiliation with many who had fought him and slavery so bitterly. That convention was held on Monday, June 9, 1828. After some preliminary work a committee of seven was appointed on motion of Field, to draft resolutions "expressive of the sense of the convention," and the chair appointed Field, Middlecoff, Goforth, Usher, Young, Butcher and Kuykendall, said committee^s. The first resolution declared a "total want of confidence in the political integrity and principles of John Quincy Adams," but that we have "unshaken confidence in the integrity, firmness, patriotism and ability of General Jackson." The fourth resolution endorsed the candidacy of Richard M. Young for the United States Senate.

In that convention Field rose and in a most convincing manner gave the reasons of the committee for their resolutions which contained many principles differing from those he advocated in 1823.

During Edwards' administration, while Secretary of State, he apostatized and became a Whig; Reynolds, a democrat, continued him four years, and when Duncan became a Whig, that action assured him of an unmolested tenure of his office for four years more.

Field at all times contended that as an office holder he was immune from political influence under the constitution, and a later opinion of the Supreme court sus-

^s See Life of Adam W. Snyder, by Dr. J. F. Snyder, a very rare book.

tained that contention. So early as September 17, 1830, when in writing Edwards he stated: "I am anxious to know whether Reynolds is willing to continue me as Secretary. I am confident that he has no power to appoint any person without my resigning. I believe the principle has been settled in the case of Forquer^o, that the office is not at the pleasure of the Governor. Let me hear from you."

Reynolds did adopt that construction, and as stated, so did Duncan. But when Carlin came into office with his different political views and his enmity for all things which had to do with the Duncan administration, he proceeded to encompass the downfall of Field by removing him summarily. He "removed" him on paper and appointed John A. McClernand. Field declined to be removed. McClernand brought quo warranto proceedings against Field to try his right to the office and in that fight very many pretty maneuvers were made by both sides. The Supreme court, which contained a majority of Whigs, found in favor of the Field contention that the Governor could not remove; that "life or good behavior" was the tenure. In that case, Field was his own principal counsel and it has been said that his arguments were masterpieces of logic and English.

At that decision the democrats over the state were wrought into a high state of indignation and plans were laid at once to overturn it. An enlargement of the court and an enlargement of their duties was put into a bill over which a fight followed very like the one of 1823. One vote, the one needed to pass it through the house, was secured by promises of appointing to the office of clerk of the new body, E. M. Peck, a hard worker for the accomplishment of Field's downfall. The vote was supplied, the man was appointed and on the record we find

^o This same George Forquer upon one occasion wrote to Gov. Edwards: "Shall I fight for Lockwood, Wilson, Field, Caverly, Pugh, etc., not one of whom has even the germs of a statesman or politician in him?" But Forquer's criticism should not be noticed.

this legend in the executive record: "Governor Carlin this day nominated to the Senate, Stephen A. Douglas to be Secretary of State. The Senate confirmed said nomination and Stephen A. Douglas was commissioned, qualified, and entered upon the duties of his office." Referring to the Senate Journal of November 30, 1840, Douglas' appointment came up for confirmation; a Senator objected on the ground that the Governor had no authority to make such an appointment except in the case of vacancy, and that the Senate had no knowledge of the existence of any such vacancy. The Douglas appointment, however, was confirmed on that day. To have tried another time to question the effectuality of quo warranto proceedings, would have been useless, because the new Supreme Court had been so framed as to preclude all possibility of holding that Field might continue. The removal ended Field's political career in Illinois and with it went Field himself, to other parts.

It does seem strange that with his transcendent ability and his great reputation as a lawyer, he should prefer small offices and those too in a country just opening up to settlement like the then territory of Wisconsin. But so it was, so soon as Field found himself deprived of office in Illinois, he directed his energies toward securing another. On the election of General Harrison, a Whig, he was appointed in 1841, Secretary of the territory of Wisconsin. This office he filled until the Whigs lost control of the government. While in Wisconsin, his administration was colorless and his personality submerged. His career was mediocre and his office brought him nothing but troubles.

When he accepted the office, the territory of Wisconsin was almost without laws. The code was crude and most of its provisions susceptible of various constructions. Wherefore when Field's successor got himself well established in office he made it his business to make Field as uncomfortable and his administration as odious as

possible. Field was not a man to observe formalities to any great extent and in the management of his office he but used the ordinary forms of business with their precautions, taking receipts for moneys, signing vouchers and other papers and keeping his books with the neatness of the average careless man. He accounted for his official acts in final settlement and left supposedly with a clean page. Field was honest in his every business transaction, but later, by reason of some of his careless observances which did not fill the rules of red tape prescribed by a hostile administration at Washington, he was required to save his bondsmen by securing congressional action in making formal entries by legislation before allowing him and those bondsmen an acquittance of their obligations.¹⁰

Aside from this record, Field's life in Wisconsin is a blank and it is not at all remarkable that he should

¹⁰ On December 7, 1853, a message from the House states, "They have passed a joint resolution for the relief of Alexander P. Field, late Secretary of Wisconsin Territory, and sureties, in which they request the concurrence of the Senate." Over in the Senate this resolution (H. R. 1), was read and considered and sent back to the House for its concurrence on a slight amendment, which was done, and later the Senate passed it.

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the proper accounting officers of the Treasury Department be authorized and directed to settle the accounts of Alexander P. Field, late Secretary of Wisconsin Territory, upon principles of equity and justice; *Provided*, That no credit shall be allowed the said Field in said settlement under this resolution except such of the following items numbering from one to twelve, inclusive, claimed by said Field, as the said accounting officers may determine in equity and justice should be allowed.

Item No. 1. W. W. Wyman, payment on bond not yet surrendered, four hundred and thirty-seven dollars (\$437.00.)

Item No. 2. C. C. Shales, payment on bond not yet surrendered, one thousand and seventy-five dollars (\$1,075.00.)

Item No. 3. Over payment to Josiah A. Noonan for printing, one hundred dollars and forty-one cents (\$100.41.)

Item No. 4. Over payment to John Catlin, one hundred and seven dollars (\$107.00.)

Item No. 5. George I Coates' bond, wanting Gridley's endorsement, one hundred dollars (\$100.00.)

Item No. 6. E. Singerland's bond, wanting J. Kneeland's endorsement, one hundred dollars (\$100.00.)

Item No. 7. James Sullivan's bond, wanting his own endorsement,

turn away for a more inviting field. About the year 1847¹¹, he left Wisconsin¹² and removed to St Louis to resume the practice of the law, and while not within the confines of the State of Illinois, Field once more found himself in the midst of old friends and great lawyers.

Field preferred criminal practice or actions sounding in damages. He cared nothing for chancery or law cases. Moreover, he preferred to defend the person charged with crime. Until he became Attorney General of Louisiana he seldom prosecuted, but when he did he was so realistically fierce that he has been known to frighten the spectators in the court room. In certain cases of the other sort, those sounding in damages, he preferred the side of the plaintiff and was known to secure the largest verdicts in the history of the legal profession during his times and in every noted case of those days, Field had a place at counsel's table in the court room. He controlled juries as he did audiences when stump speaking. He could convulse them with laughter or stir them to the point of riot, at pleasure. No man to this very day

thirty-five dollars (\$35.00.)

Item No. 8. Appropriation of Legislative Assembly, for expenses of journey to Washington, procuring and transporting funds, etc., eight hundred dollars (\$800.00.)

Item No. 9. Payment to Barlow Shackelford, six dollars and sixty-five cents (\$6.65.)

Item No. 10. Appropriation of Legislative Assembly, February, eighteen hundred forty-three, for expense to Washington, procuring and transporting money for expenses of Legislative Assembly, eight hundred dollars (\$800.00.)

Item No. 11. Appropriation for office rent, stationery, etc., one hundred dollars (\$100.00.)

Item No. 12. Appropriation for postage, one hundred dollars (\$100.00.) Making in all, three thousand, seven hundred and sixty-one dollars and six cents (\$3,761.06.)

Approved, January 24, 1854.

¹¹ Gov. Charles P. Johnson, Vol. 9, Publications Illinois Historical Society, p. 41. In one of his obituary notices the statement was made that he remained in Wisconsin and assisted in the affairs of the new state. That is improbable because the state was not admitted until 1848. Moreover, Field was a Whig and the democrats permitted no whig to share in the good things of the new state. Others say he resigned after two years service and went to St. Louis in 1843.

¹² The year before his death, he paid a visit to old Wisconsin scenes

has possessed that power to the extent Field possessed it. He was very learned in the law. Precedents at the time of his life on the circuit were scarce. Books were hard to obtain. Most law was argued from principle and decisions were rendered by a very able bench from principle. Field knew well the basic structure upon which all law was founded. Moreover he made his arguments so plausible and he could bring out his points with a clearness well nigh unanswerable. Or, on the other hand, he could and more often than not he would, bully a witness into a state of mind in which that witness would be brought to admit that black was white in order to get away from Field. He could and did move juries which had been known to seek a place in the jury box in order to find against him. The State of Illinois never has produced a lawyer with greater power over a jury than Field wielded. One instance is cited by a lawyer whose opinion must be accepted, which details in graphic words the wonderful force and power of Field. Governor Charles P. Johnson¹⁸ of St. Louis, himself a great criminal lawyer, listened to Field's argument. It was a case tried in Illinois while Field resided in St. Louis. The court room was crowded. The powerful physique of Field had more or less of influence always, but with his manipulation of it, it was unusually impressive in that trial and wielded more than its accustomed power as it swayed to and fro in flights of eloquence and vituperation by turns. Governor Johnson as a boy sat close by him spell bound. It was one of those arguments about which we read so often in stories which have immortalized their hero with a single speech. When, later he had removed to New Orleans and in a measure, dropped his habits of dissipation, he devoted all his energies to criminal law and became the leading criminal lawyer in the South. There he was the same Field matured. There was not the man in the state who could match him in eloquence.

¹⁸ Vol 9, Publications Illinois Historical Society, p. 41.

It has been said that those speeches which touch the heart strongest in delivery, do not read well, have not the same eloquent throbs. In Field's case those few speeches which remain preserved, the man's simplicity uncovers the highest type of eloquence. They furnish reading which will rank as literature. His mannerisms had much to do with his impressiveness, but not all by any means. He was intensely magnetic. He did not care to talk to the galleries ever. Not one instance can be sighted when he descended to clap-trap to move a jury or an audience. His argument before the National House of Representatives, as we read it from this distance, was a plain statement, nevertheless it is a masterful and eloquent appeal and the press comments of the day gave it the highest praise, and it attracted universal attention and sympathy. Standing before his prejudged jury, Field seemed to cast his tremendous personality back over his entire career, blot it out by a supreme effort and then by a powerful effort stimulated himself for the creation of a new Field thereafter. E. B. Washburne heard that speech and publicly and privately he has characterized it as something bordering upon the verge of inspiration. It was the climax of his forensic efforts.

Field in his practice was successful. His victories outnumbered his defeats ten to one.

During the mania for internal improvement schemes in Illinois, Field was one of the very few public men who dared oppose them. He would not permit a constituency to change him, though in one respect he failed to grasp the possibilities of the subject. Upon one occasion when he appeared as one of the lobby so common and so powerful in those days before the legislatures, he ridiculed the proposed Illinois Central railroad scheme, which proposed to run a railroad from Cairo to Chicago. Said he in the speech¹⁴ among other things: "Let me imagine

¹⁴ U. S. Linder's *Reminiscences*, p. 205.

I see one of our plain Illinois suckers standing near the road as a train of cars comes dashing up from Cairo to Chicago. The sucker exclaims, 'Railroad, ahoy!' The conductor checks up his cars, when the sucker continues, 'where are you from and whither are you bound?' The conductor answers in a fine and feeble voice, 'From Kiro to Chicago.' 'What are you loaded with?' asks the sucker. The conductor answers, 'With hoop poles and bull frogs.' And so he carried his ridicule to a conclusion, expressing therein his belief to infatuation that there was not money enough in the whole world to build the roads mapped out by the agitators. The verdict amongst his contemporaries is unanimous that he was fearful and terrible as an antagonist in legal and political battles. His sarcasm was withering.

Upon a certain occasion he found himself opposed to a man who had switched in politics so many times that it became impossible to follow his party peregrinations. Field seemed forgetful of his own changes. Said he in a speech: "I don't know where to find him. He reminds me of the Kentucky negro whose master had set him to listing furrows for corn planting. 'Ned, your furrows are not straight,' objected the master. 'You should stand about four feet from your last furrow and take an object upon the opposite side of the field and drive straight for it. Now, put your plow in here, and drive for that cow which is on the opposite side of the field. Make straight for her tail and you will come out all right.' The master retired for an hour when he returned to see how Ned had obeyed his instructions. Ned was discovered far to the right, close to the cow. Being in a great passion when Ned was reached the master said to Ned, 'Didn't I tell you to plow straight furrows?' 'Yes, Massa,' answered Ned, 'but you dun tol' me t' make straight fo' dat cow's tail, an' fo' God I've followed the — hussy whahevah she's gone, an' if dese furrohs aint straight enuf for t' please you, I'm berry sorry.' Now,

the gentleman who has preceded me, has followed the loco foco cow wherever she has run and behold! what a political furrow he has made!"¹⁴

Field was six feet two inches tall, raw boned and at the time of his death weighed approximately 170 pounds. That weight he had maintained nearly all his adult life. His complexion was dark, almost swarthy. His eyes were gray and in excitement or anger they snapped fire like red hot coals. His features¹⁵ were large and at the same time, attractive. His hair was a dark brown and never grew gray as he advanced in years. For perhaps five years before he died, he had stopped the use of liquor altogether. Though a hard drinker, his constitution had suffered nothing; neither was any shock experienced, apparently, at a somewhat sudden termination of his habit.

Field was a versatile man. He was a first class mixer; at the same time he could be a fine hater, though it never was his disposition to cherish grudges. His habits had been altogether too convivial. In the early days of Illinois when every other man almost, drank freely, he formed many warm friendships and when Lincoln desired to send money to New Orleans to secure the release of a negro boy who had been kidnapped¹⁶, after a fashion they had down there when free negroes came to the city, he sent the money to "his old friend" Field, who performed the service and the negro secured his freedom. As before stated, Field was scrupulously honest in money matters and incurred no debts. It was the custom upon the early Illinois circuit to be sociable and to form strong attachments regardless of any of the frailties of the man. Consequently when Field left St. Louis, he left

¹⁴ U. S. Linder's Reminiscences, p. 205.

¹⁵ Handlin adds: "Col. Field's face was large; rather long; thin toward the last, weary and wasted, with hollow cheeks from loss of teeth. High forehead; nose rather large, a little long and heavy with good nostrils; mouth wide; chin firm. His smile cordial and winning.

¹⁶ A son of Polly, a negro woman of Springfield.—Herndon.

behind many friendships in Illinois. In St. Louis, however, which was the borderland of the South and its rather close observance of social forms, Field did not form many friendships. Down at New Orleans where the rules were drawn even more rigidly, it has been said of him that few men had more acquaintances in New Orleans and fewer friends¹⁷. Appearance there had its weight, and Field's appearance was never immaculate; it was the other extreme almost. While not shabby, it was slovenly; but he had no special aims or ambitions in New Orleans nor any other place. Over the Illinois circuit, and while sitting around the fire of the country tavern with brother lawyers and witnesses and suitors, Field would entertain his companions with stories, much too risqué, it must be confessed. He was a fine singer, to use the terms of Linder. He also would quote poetry *ad libitum*. It should be no matter of wonder, therefore, that he was immensely popular everywhere he went, among the backwoodsmen of Illinois. This same Linder recalls one instance at Carmi in White county, where Field was attending court, when he thrilled his large audience by singing the song to be found in Moore's *Melodies*, commencing:

"So slow our ship her foaming track,
 Against the wind was cleaving;
 Her trembling pennant still looked back
 To that dear old isle she was leaving."

The effect was electrical. Whether in story or song, conversation or casual greeting, Field never failed to impress deeply. It has been the State's loss that he was content to remain stationary while he lived in Illinois.

He was what is denominated a good liver; perhaps a high liver. He was a princely entertainer, though in New Orleans he never was permitted to become a popular

¹⁷ William Beers.

one and his habits should not be charged for the state of isolation he was permitted to enjoy in a social way. He had lived for so long a time in the northern State of Illinois, that he had absorbed the ways of Illinois and then, too, Field was a Union man to the core and men with that sentiment, which he took no pains to hide, were not popular candidates for favor at those times.

One incident occurred during the war, when one might suspect a yellow streak in Field's patriotism. Before the capture of New Orleans a card¹⁸ appeared in a New Orleans paper to the effect that "some persons had slandered him by saying that he had gone on board a Yankee gunboat, a part of Farragut's fleet and then lying in the river, but that his known character for loyalty to the South should forbid the imputation from being believed by any person who knew him." Such a card did appear over Field's name and when Thad Stevens called upon Field for an explanation of it, he made no comments upon it in his speech. This published card Gen. Benjamin F. Butler discovered and sent to Washington when Field appeared as a duly elected member of Congress, and demanded admission. There can be no doubt that that card had its influence with such rabid men as Stevens, though it must be said that Field's contemporary who claimed an election from the adjoining district, was also denied admission without any charge of disloyalty being made against him.

Of Field's honest election to a seat in the 38th Congress by the loyal men of Louisiana, there can be no doubt and at any other period of our history his right to a seat would not have been questioned. The paucity of votes (156) was first objected. Field explained the objection. Very few votes were cast. At the time of the election, November 2, 1863, a man named George F. Shepley and styled Brig. General, was military governor

¹⁸ In May, 1862, it appeared in the New Orleans Delta.

of New Orleans. When the loyal men of that city demanded a voice in the government of Washington, this man forbade the election. He suppressed it so far as the city was concerned. But it seems that a small territory outside the city was in Field's district and in that small territory a vote was polled and Field was duly elected by that vote. In vain he explained the facts; they were admitted, but after a long and heated debate the resolution refusing him the right to take his seat was passed by a vote of 85 to 48.

At the opening his name was enrolled and he was permitted to take his seat and with his colleague, Thomas Cottman, to vote upon some minor matters of organization, but those were all. At the passage of the resolution, however, Congress gave him the mileage and pay of a member up to and including the conclusion of the proceedings. His appeal¹⁹ upon the floor of the house was a strong one²⁰ and would have stirred any but the man made mad in the midst of the great struggle to disrupt the Union and when it was over, Field returned to New Orleans and resumed his practice without carrying away any of the animosities which might have lodged in the breast of a man who in the face of ostracism and even bullets had declared his loyalty. It required boldness to return to New Orleans after making the speech which he made on the floor of Congress.²¹

At that time Field was a man of no financial means. He enjoyed a large practice and had enjoyed it during all his residence there, but his living expenses were high

¹⁹ He admitted that he had owned a few negroes. (So did Henry Clay. Recent records divulge the fact that Grant did too.—Ed.)

²⁰ While the card received no attention, sentiment and circumstances were noticed which would make any man quail; yet at that very time he was making public declarations that the Union should not be dissolved.

²¹ I have been unable so far to learn the details of Field's fight with Judge Kelly on the return of the former to New Orleans. The affair grew out of Field's rejection and in the course of the same, Field stabbed Kelly.

and he consumed his income as he went along. In consequence when he went to Washington to demand his seat he was compelled to borrow the money to pay his expenses. Being particular about his obligations, the sum was returned duly.²²

With the Kellogg crowd in 1873, Field was elected Attorney General of Louisiana. Nothing establishes the man's inherent honesty of purpose and action more than his conduct during that administration. Instead of winking at certain features of political misconduct while he was in office and which he might have found it advantageous to overlook, he centered his whole energies to break them up and prosecute the offenders. Then his tremendous ability was shown with the lustre which might have been his had he applied himself at any time before. He attacked what was called at the time, the ring, with such ferocity that we are told he broke it up effectually. That action wrung from those who had hated him, spontaneous and wide-spread applause.

The exact date when Field settled in New Orleans is not known. His first law partner, W. W. Handlin has told me that it was five or ten years prior to 1857.²³ If, as Governor Johnson thinks, he went to St. Louis about the year 1847, then of course he could not have settled in New Orleans in that year. Then too, it is possible that Governor Johnson might have erred, because Field would not probably have remained in Wisconsin after his term of four years expired. He was appointed Secretary of the territory in 1841, which would make his term of office expire in 1845, and I am inclined to think that date was practically the correct year for his settlement in St. Louis. If, as has been said, he did not remain long

²² Mr. Handlin told me that Avendam Brothers, clients of his, loaned Field \$200, to go to Washington and that it was repaid.

²³ Herndon says Lincoln sent the money to Field about 1854, to secure the negro boy's release. In his obituary, written by his widow, it is stated he had lived in New Orleans over 30 years and I am inclined to believe, she is nearer right than others. Herndon, Vol. 2, p. 48, 2d Ed.

in St. Louis, he still might have settled in New Orleans in 1847. At all events Mr. Handlin, who went into the history of Field very minutely, must be held to know the man, his life and dates as well as any living authority, because he was one of the very few intimates which Field had in New Orleans. He has told me that when Farragut's fleet sailed up the river, that he and Field sung the Star Spangled Banner openly on the wharf. Speaking of Field's eloquence he put it thus: "He was as eloquent as a mocking bird."

Mr. Handlin, in commenting upon the estate which Field left, said it consisted of a fine residence and some other property. When at last, he dropped his expensive habits, he began to accumulate something and in a short time he would have secured a handsome competency. From his will I learned that the suit for succession was commenced September 16, 1876. He died intestate. His first wife died in September, 1863, in New Orleans. From the letter written by Hooper Warren already quoted, we know that he was a married man in 1829, and from letters written by Jonesboro parties, it is known that he married there; but her name we have been unable to secure even from the records of the probate court, because unfortunately, in moving the files from which the name might be gained, they were misplaced. By his first marriage, he had a daughter named Helena F., who at the time of her father's death was a spinster living in Louisville, Ky. Alice O. Field, another daughter, married a man named Samuel Smith, who lived in St. Louis at the time of her father's decease. There was another daughter named Julia E. Field, who married a man named Isaac V. W. Dutcher, Jr., who lived in St. Louis at the time of Field's death. There was a son, also of St. Louis, named Alexander P. Field. For a second wife, Field married Eliza Mills, widow of a steamboat pilot known as Jack Downing. Her son, Eugene, took the name of Field upon his adoption by the latter.

Field's death occurred on the 19th day of August, 1876. The entry made in the family bible is as follows:

"Died August 19th, 1876, at 2 P. M., Saturday, Alexander Pope Field, aged 75 years, 9 months and 19 days,—a native of Louisville, Kentucky, a resident of New Orleans, La., over thirty years. Died full of years, honored by all good men for his great personal merit and sterling integrity. Passed to rest surrounded by his many friends, with his devoted wife and son by his side, closing his dear eyes in sleep even as a babe on the breast of its mother, his hand clasping that of her who had so faithfully stood by his side in the declining years of his life, to be now left deserted indeed!

Minnie E. Field."

By this record it will be noticed that her name in full must have been Minnie Eliza. Mr. Handlin is authority for the statement that her maiden name was Violet.

To do Col. Field justice his obituary notices copied from the New Orleans papers should be copied in full. They put him in his true light as a fighter, a great trial lawyer and a thoroughly honest man. He was called Colonel to the day of his death. This title was not secured from his service in the Black Hawk War, which contained nothing in the way of titles less than Colonel. So early as 1829 he was styled Colonel. In correspondence and through the kindness of Adjutant General Frank S. Dickson, we have been enabled to discover his first claim to a military title. On November 27, 1821, he was appointed Major of the Tenth Regiment, Illinois Militia, to rank from the same date. To step from the office of Major to that of Colonel was an easy matter in those early days and the title "Colonel" went to him from this commission, which was given him in his twenty-first year.

Before concluding, I cannot resist the temptation to mention the persistent efforts required to find a picture



ALEXANDER POPE FIELD AND WIFE.

of Alexander P. Field. Picture hunting becomes something of a science as one will find. While working at the "Black Hawk War," my efforts to secure Field's picture took me over six or seven years of inquiry, beginning with Louisville and traveling along the path pursued by Field. The editor of the Times-Democrat of New Orleans, at last told me to give up my search; that Field had a great horror of the camera and would not sit. Further rambles took me through all the cities in which his children had lived. Every historical society in the west was implored to lend their services. Once in New Orleans an "archivist" led me along until several dollars had been contributed and then let me drop. Mr. William Beer gave me the most help I secured in New Orleans and that too, cheerfully. He is librarian of the Howard Memorial Library and here I wish to thank him publicly for the great pains he went to in securing from the records a list of Field's property and his descendants and for making endless inquiries among the New Orleans acquaintances of Field. But Mr. Beer gave it up at last. Every one to whom he spoke assured him that Field would not face a camera under pressure of a battery of guns. In desperation I addressed a letter to the Picayune. It fell into the hands of an editor who knew Field very well. He referred me to every photographer who ever lived there from 1840 to 1876. I wrote to every one of them. But from those who had not died I received the answer that no picture had ever been made of Field to their knowledge. Then Mr. J. M. Augustin referred me to W. W. Handlin, already mentioned. This gentleman put in over a year's time. First he would get a lead and then it would evaporate. One was located at last in Washington, only to find that it had been burned in a fire which had consumed the house. He gave it up and referred me to Memphis, Louisville, St. Louis and parties elsewhere, all of whom declared they knew nothing of a picture. Nearly two years after our first correspond-

ence, Mr. Handlin sent me two pictures of Field and I promptly sent them to Mrs. Jessie Palmer Weber, our secretary, to be copied. In all over ten years had been consumed in that search.

(From the New Orleans Democrat, Sunday, August 20th, 1876.)

A DEAD LION.

In the death of Alexander P. Field, which occurred on Saturday last, this state has lost a valuable citizen and the Bar one of its ablest and sturdiest members. Few men could have borne with such courage and constancy, against the many obstacles, insults and annoyances to which Col. Field has been exposed from the ungrateful, treacherous and corrupt party and administration during the last year, whilst afflicted with a most painful, weakening and exhausting disease. The stout heart and dauntless spirit of the veteran, even when lying helpless in his bed, hurled defiance at his enemies, and his last hours of consultation with his friends and representatives in the duties of his profession, related to the vigorous prosecution of certain state officials for defalcation. Col. Field was of the stock and training which produced such characters as he developed in the course of his services as the Radical Attorney General under Kellogg's administration.

He was a Kentuckian by birth, emigrated to Illinois, when it was a territory, served that State in several capacities, as a member of the legislature, district attorney, and finally as Secretary of State.

It was while in this position that the celebrated quo warranto case arose, to which Col. Field and Stephen A. Douglas were parties, involving the title to the office, and the proper proceedings to determine the right. A strong Whig in politics, Col. Field was appointed by General Harrison, Secretary of State for the new terri-

tory of Wisconsin. After practicing law in that territory and participating in the organization of the state government.²⁴ Col Field was induced to remove to St. Louis, to engage in a larger field in the practice of law, his reputation, especially as a criminal lawyer, having extended throughout the West. A few years later, he came to this city and soon attracted attention by his remarkable skill and robust oratory as a criminal pleader and advocate. He soon acquired a large practice, and for many years, was engaged in nearly all the important criminal prosecutions.

In politics Col. Field was always a strong and consistent Whig, and when secession was proclaimed in this state, he became a zealous Unionist, then a moderate conservative Republican, but never a Radical; in fact he was always opposed to the extreme views and sectionalism of that party.

As a member of Congress, or claiming a seat therein, by virtue of an irregular election, he manifested his utter contempt for, and bitter opposition to, the ultra leaders of the party. As Attorney General, put in by that party, he kept up a continual fight with his rascally associates, and wore out his energies and his life in the exposure and pursuit of their misdeeds, their corruptions, their violations of law, and perpetual plunderings of the state. They beset him with all sorts of traps, and devilments to drive him out of his office, and set upon him a pack of sub-officials, to vex and worry him into quietude, but the old lion was game to the last. In the history of the operations of his office for the last two years, will be found the compend of Radical corruption and lawlessness during Kellogg's administration.

As a criminal prosecutor, Col. Field had few equals in this country; his mind was uncommonly clear, vigorous, quick and sagacious. He had a great knowledge of

²⁴ Error.

human character, and possessed a robust eloquence and trenchant satire, which made him exceedingly effective before a jury. The frontier simplicity and roughness added to the force of his utterance, and conciliated popular favor and confidence.

(From the New Orleans Times, Monday, August 21st, 1876.)

LAID AWAY TO REST.

A. P. FIELD.

The funeral of the late Attorney General Field, was attended, last evening,²⁵ by a large number of persons, including many State and Federal officials, as well as the friends of the family.

The services were held at the late residence of the deceased, on Terpsichore, near Coliseum street, and were conducted by Rev. T. R. Markham, whose remarks upon the occasion were quite affecting. After the service, the pall-bearers, Judges Cotton, Posey, Heistand, Lynch, John Ray, and Messrs J. K. Bell, P. F. Herwig and Thomas McKnight, conveyed the remains, in a handsome metallic casket, to the hearse, which, followed by a long line of carriages, bore them to Lafayette Cemetery No. 1, where the last rites were performed, and all that was mortal of the late Attorney General, were committed to the tomb.

²⁵ 5 o'clock.

(From the Daily Picayune, New Orleans, August 22d,
1876.)

(Local article from the evening edition of the 21st.)

THE COURTS.

SUPERIOR DISTRICT COURT—THE NEW ASSISTANT ATTORNEY
GENERAL—DEATH OF HON. A. P. FIELD, AND
GEN. HARRY T. HAYS.

At 11 o'clock this (Monday) morning Judge Henry C. Dibble appeared before this tribunal and presented his commission as Assistant Attorney General which was ordered by Judge Lynch to be spread on the minutes of the Court.

Judge Dibble then announced the death of Hon. A. P. Field, Attorney General of the State of Louisiana, which occurred on Saturday. He said that in the demise of Col. Field, Louisiana had suffered an irreparable loss. He was one of the most distinguished members of the Bar and was characterized by his integrity of purpose. His life should be a light to all members of the Bar, as he was talented, learned, and never swerved from the path of duty.

Judge Dibble moved to adjourn the Court, in respect to the memory of the deceased.

Judge Cotton then rose and seconded the motion to adjourn. He said he had known Col. Field since 1851.²⁶ He had been associated with him in many criminal cases. The deceased had a vigorous intellect and a superior knowledge of human nature.

The talent he showed in the examination of witnesses was most remarkable. He stood at the head of his profession and was fearless in the defense of his clients. No man in office performed his duty as Col. Field had that of Attorney General. His memory deserved respect and veneration.

²⁶ This date sheds light on his New Orleans residence.